

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY OPERATIONS AREA

POLICY #18

SUBJECT: EBRCS Operations and System Failure Modes			
Date 9/20/13	New	Approved By Executive Chiefs	Pages 4
DISPOSITION- XCC Operational Area Policies			

INTENT

This policy and procedure guides the use of the EBRCS (East Bay Regional Communications System) in routine and system failure modes. The goal of this policy is to establish common procedures and effective coordination between all of the XCC Fire Agencies and Dispatch Centers.

PROCEDURE

The Contra Costa Regional Fire Communications Center, San Ramon Valley Fire Communications Center and City of Richmond Fire Communications Center will follow this adopted methodology for coordinating Talk Groups (TG's) and Conventional Channels. Each Agency has agreed that when requesting automatic/mutual aid from another XCC Fire Agency, that assigned resources will switch to the radio zone of the Agency having jurisdiction of the incident.

The Dispatch Center having jurisdiction, will provide the following information upon request for automatic/mutual aid resources:

- Assignment of Zone, Incident T/G, and/or Tactical Channel
- Automatic/Mutual Aid resources will switch to the appropriate Zone upon dispatch and remain there until released from the Incident or Cover assignment.

Operations

Radio TG's/Channels are identified for primary use by Agency, Battalion, or by certain Incident Types. Incident TG's/ Tactical TG's/ and Incident Channels will be assigned upon dispatch by the jurisdictional Dispatch Center. All personnel shall be familiar with the standard distribution of TG's and Channels as shown in **Chart 1**.

- Dispatch/Routine Contact – Agency dispatch and routine single unit communications with the Dispatch Center.
- Unit to unit routine contact and coordination.

- Primary Incident T/G's or Tactical Channels assigned upon dispatch to multi- unit responses.
- Alternate Tactical – Additional Tactical T/G's or Channels for fire ground communications.
- Wildland Fire Incident – Based on Agency policy, resources will be dispatched on their Primary Dispatch channel and switch to the Delta/VHF Zone when responding to Wildland Fire Incidents in Local Response Areas, Mutual Threat Zones, or State Responsibility Areas.

Chart 1 Standard Radio Talk Group/Channel Functions

Battalion 1 & 2 (CON)	Dispatch/Routine Contact	B1
Battalion 1 & 2 (CON)	Routine Unit to Unit Communications	B2
Battalion 1 & 2 (CON)	Primary Incident TG	B3 & B10
Battalion 1 & 2 (CON)	Primary Command	B4 & B9
Battalion 1 & 2 (CON)	Alternate Tactical	B5, VFIRE 22, & B14
Battalion 3 (SRM)	Dispatch/Routine Contact	A1
Battalion 3 (SRM)	Primary Tactical	A5 & A7
Battalion 3 (SRM)	Primary Command	A5 & A2
Battalion 3 (SRM)	Alternate Tactical	A6, A8, & A14
Battalion 4 (MOR)	Dispatch/Routine Contact	B1
Battalion 4 (MOR)	Routine Unit to Unit Communications	B2
Battalion 4 (MOR)	Primary Incident T/G	B6 & B10
Battalion 4 (MOR)	Primary Command	B7 & B9
Battalion 4 (MOR)	Alternate Tactical	B5, VFIRE 22, & B14
Battalion 5 (CCE)	Dispatch/Routine Contact	C1
Battalion 5 (CCE)	Routine Unit to Unit Communications	C2
Battalion 5 (CCE)	Primary Incident T/G	C6 & C10
Battalion 5 (CCE)	Primary Command	C7 & C9
Battalion 5 (CCE)	Alternate Tactical	C8, VFIRE 22, & C14
Battalion 6 (RMD/ECR)	Dispatch/Routine Contact	F1
Battalion 6 (RMD/ECR)	Primary Incident T/G	F2
Battalion 6 (RMD/ECR)	Primary Command	F3
Battalion 6 (RMD/ECR)	Alternate Tactical	F5, F6, F14, & F15
Battalion 7 (CON/POE/RDO)	Dispatch/Routine Contact	E1
Battalion 7 (CON/POE/RDO)	Routine Unit to Unit communications	E2
Battalion 7 (CON/POE/RDO)	Primary Incident T/G	E3 & E10
Battalion 7 (CON/POE/RDO)	Primary Command	E4 & E9
Battalion 7 (CON/POE/RDO)	Alternate Tactical	E5, VFIRE 22, & E14
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	Dispatch/Routine Contact	E1
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	Routine Unit to Unit Communications	E2
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	Primary Incident T/G	E6, E10
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	Primary Command	E7, E9
Crockett-Carquinez FPD	Alternate Tactical	E5, VFIRE 22, & E14
Battalion 8 (CON)	Dispatch/Routine Contact	C1
Battalion 8 (CON)	Routine Unit to Unit Communications	C2
Battalion 8 (CON)	Primary Incident T/G	C3, C10
Battalion 8 (CON)	Primary Command	C4, C9
Battalion 8 (CON)	Alternate Tactical	C5, VFIRE 22, & C14
Wildland Fire (XCC)	Primary Dispatch/Command	Delta Zone- VXCC C1 & CDF C1T1
Wildland Fire (XCC)	Primary Tactical	CDF T2 & CDF T9
Wildland Fire (XCC)	Alternate Tactical	VFIRE 22, CDF T6, & VFIRE 23

Failure Modes

EBRCS failures may occur due to software problems or equipment failures. Additionally, storms, earthquakes, vandalism, and other events can damage system equipment and support. Radio operations under the most significant failure modes are described below.

All system failures create increased demand for radio air time on the available TG/Channel (s), as well as limitations in power and coverage. Radio discipline must be maintained at a high level. Radio use will be limited to emergency Incidents and resource coordination communications only during Fail-Soft and System Failure conditions.

No-Comms:

Event: An indication that there is imbalance between transmit /receive capability of the radio and that communications might not be reliable. During this condition, the radio is unable to receive radio traffic. The radio will emit “Audible warning tone” and flash red “No Comms”.

Action: This condition will sometimes resolve with no intervention. If it doesn’t, the user can change talk groups or push the PTT button to resolve this condition.

Out of Range:

Event: Radio has lost contact with the trunk system repeater. The radio will emit a tone and displays red screen “OUT RNG”. Out of range situations can involve small or large areas on an incident.

Action: Specific procedures to address out of range conditions are outlined in XCC Policy #19, EBRCS Fire Ground Emergency Communications.

Site Trunking:

Event: Failure of one or more transmitter sites in a trunked cell. Radio displays “SITE TRUNKING”. Reduced signal coverage in the cell.

Action: Remain on current assigned channel. Follow your Communications Center’s direction

Fail-soft :

Event: Trunked cell cannot perform trunked functions. Radio displays “Fail Soft” Radios operate on conventional (single channel) repeater. Limited frequencies and sharing of available air time with other agencies.

Action: Radios will revert to a pre-determined channel. No user intervention is needed. Follow your Communication Center’s direction

Trunked System Failure:

- Event: One or more trunked cells fail. Radios operate off other trunked cells or conventional repeaters. In catastrophic failure, conventional repeaters may fail and only direct (radio to radio) communications will be available.
- Action: Specific procedures to address out of range conditions are outlined in XCC Policy #19, EBRCS Fire Ground Emergency Communications.

Battalions 1,2 & 4	VHF Back Up Central County	K1 (VCON C)
Battalions 5 & 8	VHF Back Up East County	K2 (VCON E)
Battalions 6, 7, and CRK	VHF Back Up West County	K3 (VCON W)
Battalion 3 (SRM)	VHF Back Up South County	K4 (VSRM S)

Note: If conventional repeater system fails, establish communications on the following simplex channels:

XCC OP Area	VHF XCC C1 (Portable Repeater)	K9 (VXCC C1)
Battalion 1	VHF Simplex Back Up	K5 (VTAC B)
Battalion 2	VHF Simplex Back Up	K6 (VTAC C)
Battalion 3	VHF Simplex Back Up	K7 (VTAC D)
Battalion 4	VHF Simplex Back Up	K8 (VTAC E)
Battalion 5	VHF Simplex Back Up	K10 (XCC DIR1)
Battalion 6	VHF Simplex Back Up	K11 (XCC DIR2)
Battalion 7 & CRK	VHF Simplex Back Up	K6 (VTAC C)
Battalion 8	VHF Simplex Back Up	K14 (VFIRE22)